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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Navy Sonar Training Does Not Impact Coastal Zone California Coastal Commission Told**

The U.S. Navy today notified the California Coastal Commission that its upcoming exercises to prepare Sailors for overseas deployments will not endanger marine life nor affect coastal resources.

In accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Navy submitted a Coastal Consistency Determination to the Commission in October 2006 for five training operations that could affect California coastal uses and resources. At a hearing on Jan. 10, 2007, the Commission concurred with the Navy's submittal but asked the Navy to follow 14 restrictive conditions pertaining to mid-frequency active sonar use that would occur well-beyond the coastal zone. If implemented, these restrictions would prevent effective sonar training.

The sonar training, which is just one part of the overall exercise, uses the same basic sonar equipment the Navy has used without incident over the last 30 years in the ocean off Southern California, where the number of marine mammals has been increasing.

The Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) and Composite Unit Training Exercise (COMPTUEX) bring ships, submarines and aircraft together in challenging scenarios. All West Coast-based aircraft carrier strike groups and expeditionary strike groups that may take Sailors and Marines into harm's way must complete these exercises off Southern California before they deploy to the Western Pacific and Middle East.

This training must involve complex scenarios because Sailors and Marines are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate their skills before deploying, Rear Adm. Christopher J. Mossey said in his letter to the Commission.

"Anti-submarine warfare is a vital joint war-fighting requirement, but a uniquely Navy core competency that is the U.S. Pacific Fleet's top war-fighting priority," said Vice Adm. Barry Costello, the U.S. 3rd Fleet commander who oversees naval training in the Eastern Pacific. "It is the single-most difficult warfare area to master and maintain proficiency."

Today, there are more than 180 extremely quiet diesel-electric submarines in the Pacific within reach of critical choke points and navigational sea-lanes. Because submarines are inherently covert, they are able to intrude in sensitive areas without being detected.

Active sonar is also used to detect undersea mines and for navigation.

“The Navy does not take lightly our responsibility to the environment and marine life, and we can be responsible environmental stewards while our sonar operators receive the realistic training and experience at sea they need,” Costello said. “The ability to operate complex anti-submarine warfare systems is a highly perishable skill.”

To minimize the risk to marine life, the Navy takes a number of steps when operating at sea, such as posting additional lookouts specifically trained to detect marine mammals.

The Navy is a world leader in marine mammal research, dedicating more than \$14 million last year alone. In addition to the significant sonar-related research, scientists and veterinarians working with the Navy’s marine mammal program have made important advances in the care, diagnosis and treatment of marine mammal diseases.

“The Navy remains committed to marine mammal research to better understand the potential effects of man-made sound on marine mammals to ensure Navy policy and compliance are based on the best known scientific research and information available,” said Mossey, who is the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Civil Engineer.

The Navy will continue to coordinate with the commission through the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, which will analyze all training operations in the Southern California Range Complex.